

Town of Berlin Planning and Zoning

Single-Family Residential Fences and Accessory Structures (Sheds, Pools, Garages, etc.) A Visual Guide

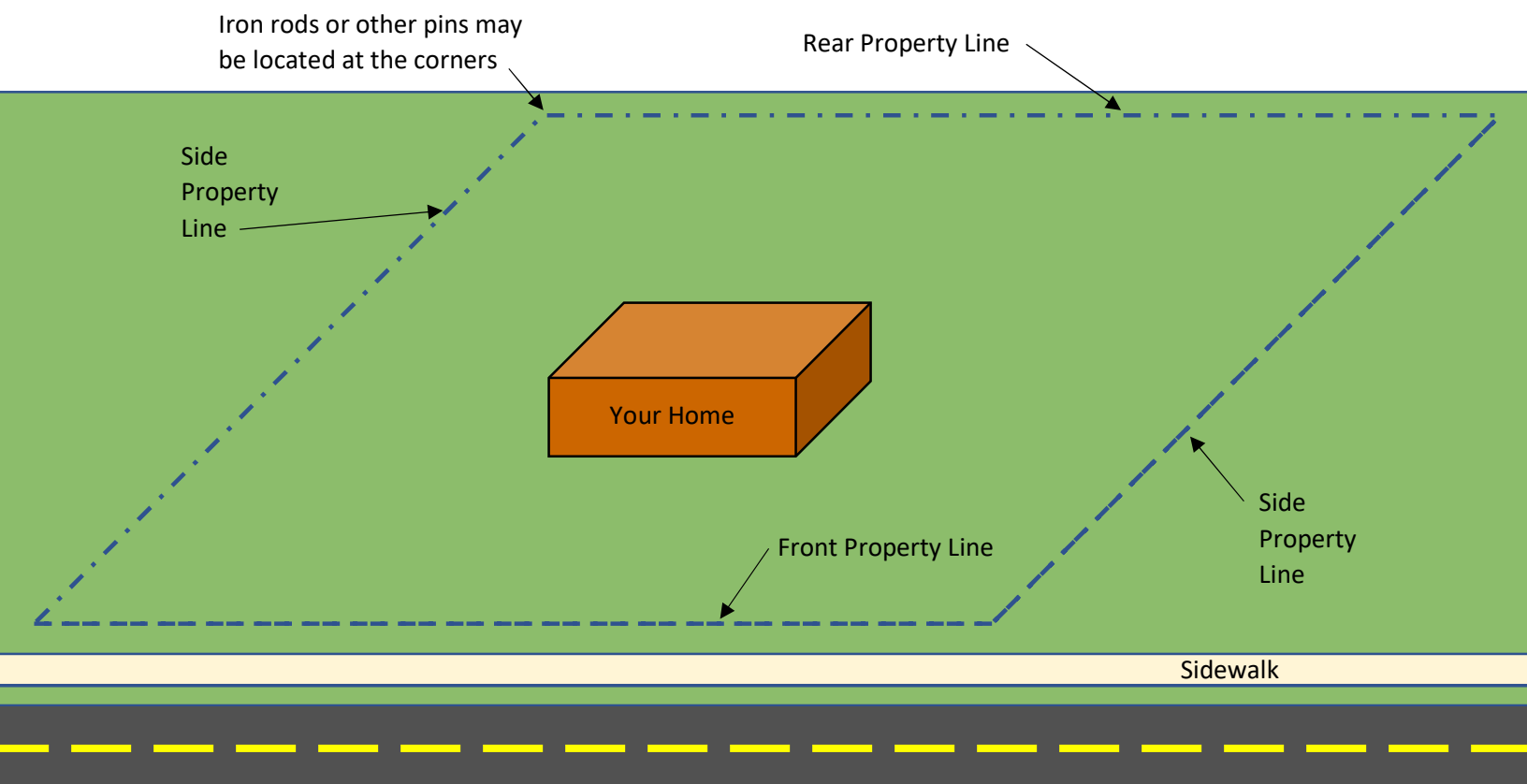
It is important to know how the town's zoning regulations apply to installing a fence, shed, or other structure on your property. Although not all regulations and possible situations are described here (those are identified in the full Zoning Regulations), this visual reference should help get you started and generally guide you through what you can build, what size it can be, and where you can locate it on your property.

The key pieces of starting information for any project include:

- 1) **The location of the property lines**
- 2) **The zone for the property**
- 3) **The required setbacks for your zone**

1. Find your property lines

- Your property lines are the invisible borders of your property. Your property lines are NOT the edge of the road, the sidewalk, an existing fence, or a row of trees between you and your neighbor.
- You may have "pins" at the corners of your property. These pins are typically iron rods, rebar, or similar fixtures and are placed by surveyors when marking out properties. Property lines run between the pins.
- Beside corner pins or other markers placed by a licensed surveyor, the only other way to identify your property lines is to view them on a copy of a survey (also known as a plot plan). Surveys will typically show the dimensions from the house to the property lines.
- Online maps (like GIS or Google) are for general reference only and are NOT 100% accurate.



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2. Find your zone

- The quickest way to Identify your zone is by searching for your property online:
<https://berlin.mapxpress.net/>

- Click 'Zoom to GIS' when your property appears in the search results

Property Search **Search Results**

Name: ex. Smith
House No: 240
Street: KENSINGTON RD
Parcel Id: ex. 9-3-54-29

Click on Zoom to GIS to activate the MapXpress Application, where you will be able to create an **abutters** mailing list.

*** After you zoom to parcel click on it to enter a distance value. ***

Your Search of: ,240 KENSINGTON RD,

Picture	MBL/Owner/Address	Quick Links	MapXpress
	9-3-54-29-8026 BERLIN TOWN OF 240 KENSINGTON RD	Parcel Details Quick Map Property Card	Zoom to GIS

- In the upper right corner, click the dropdown box and select the 'Zoning' layer

Town of Berlin, Connecticut
Geographic & Property Information Application

Full Town View Reset Map Search Print Map Help Select

Base Maps / Air Photos

Map Layer

- Municipal Light Poles
- Zoning
- Utility Poles
- Sewer Service Area
- Aquifer Protection Area
- Sanitary Sewer System
- Wetland Soil
- Storm Water System
- Farmland Soil
- Water System
- Open Space Properties
- Commercial Properties
- Trails
- Undeveloped Comm/Indus.
- Schools & DayCares
- Developable Properties
- Elevation Data 2009
- Elevation Data 2016
- Current FEMA Mapping

- Zoom in on your property until you see the zone labels appear (R-11, R-15, etc.)

54

WHISPERING BROOK DR

R-11

R-15

COMMUNITY CENTER 230

BERLIN PECK MEMORIAL Community Library 231

Library Center

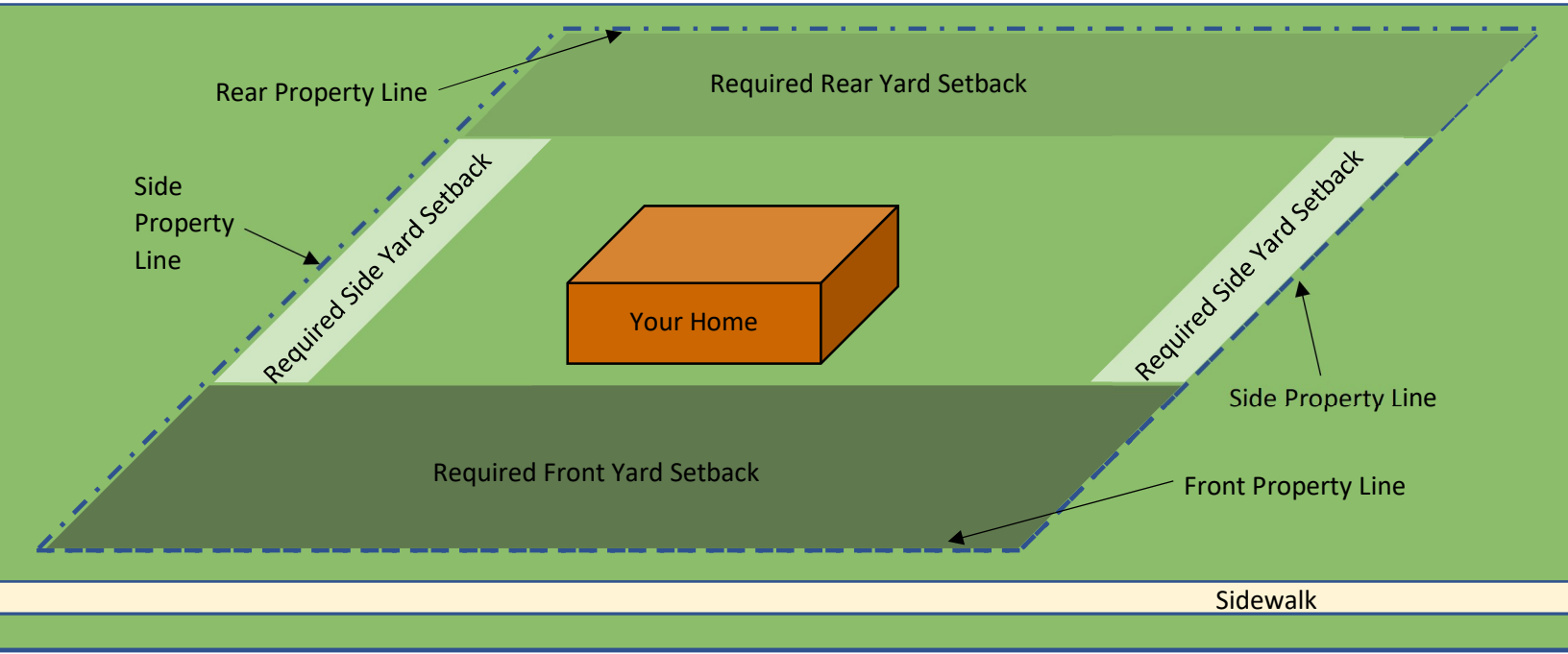
MAVROPOULOS MOORE PLUG

- While some properties have special zoning circumstances that will be confirmed if you apply for a fence, shed, or other approval, most homeowners in Berlin can identify their zone via the method above.

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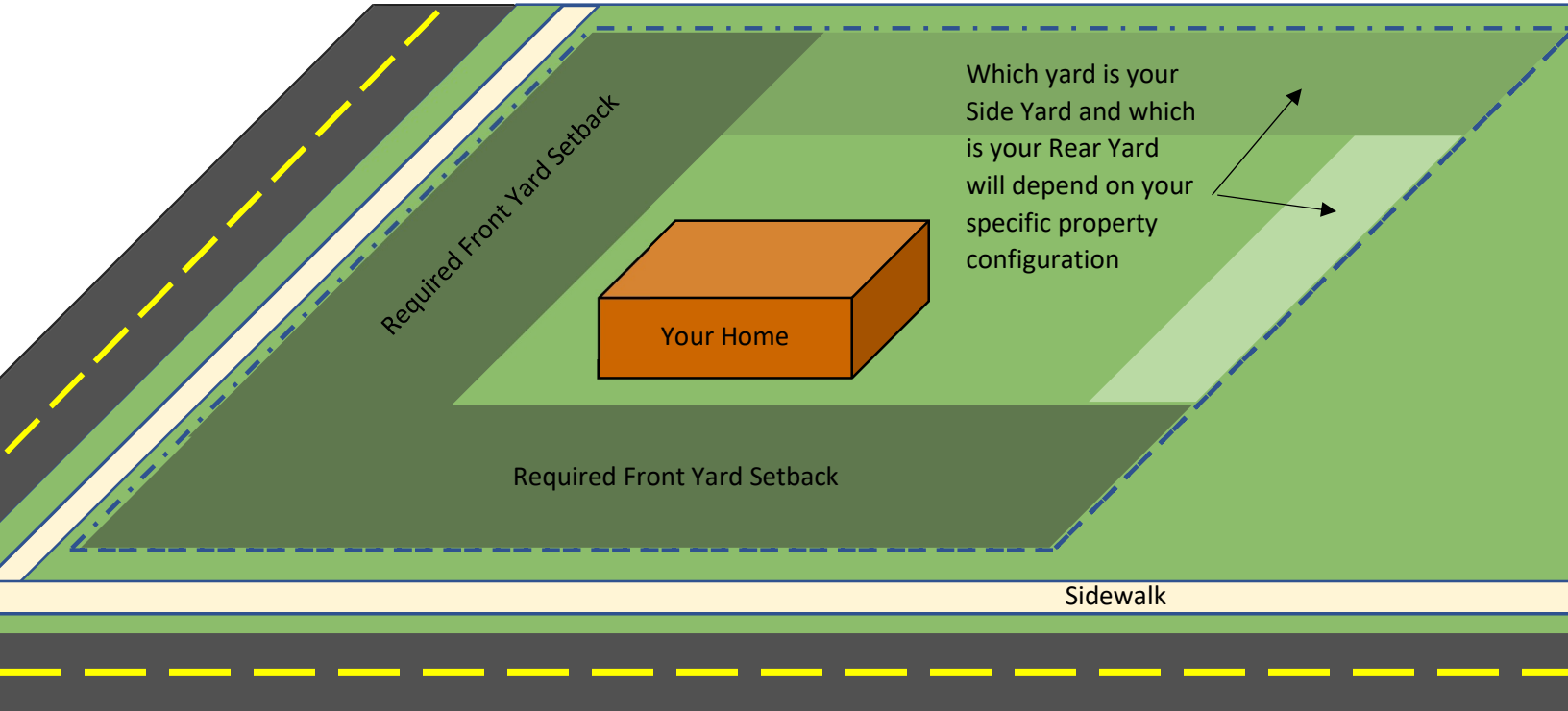
3. Identify your setbacks

- Setbacks are the minimum distance that structures need to be kept from the property lines.
- Setback distances depend on the zone for the property.



For corner properties:

- There will be two Front Yards for your property. The Side and Rear Yard configuration will depend on your specific property configuration
- The two Front Yard configuration is true even if you do not consider it your 'front yard'. This is important because many structures cannot be built in Front Yards.



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Setback distances depend on the zone

- Once you know your zone, you can look up the setbacks in the table below.
 - If your zone is not listed below, you have more unique zoning and can contact the Planning and Zoning Department for more information.
- Principal setbacks are identified in **RED**, and are used for additions, attached decks and garages, and structures within 12 feet of the house and anything attached to it. They are also used to determine maximum fence heights.
- Accessory setbacks are identified in **BLUE**, and are used for detached structures that are 12 feet or more from the house and anything attached to it (e.g., decks)

Single Family Residential Setbacks

		R-86	R-43	R-21	R-15	R-11	R-7
Principal Setbacks (additions, attached structures, and structures less than 12 feet from the house)	Front	75	50	40	35	25	20
	Side (each)	50	30	20	10	10	10
	Side (total two)	100	60	45	25	20	20
	Rear	75	50	50	40	40	30
Accessory Setbacks (12 feet or more from house and attachments)	Front	75	50	40	35	25	20
	Side	10	10	10	5	5	5
	Rear	30	30	15	5	5	5

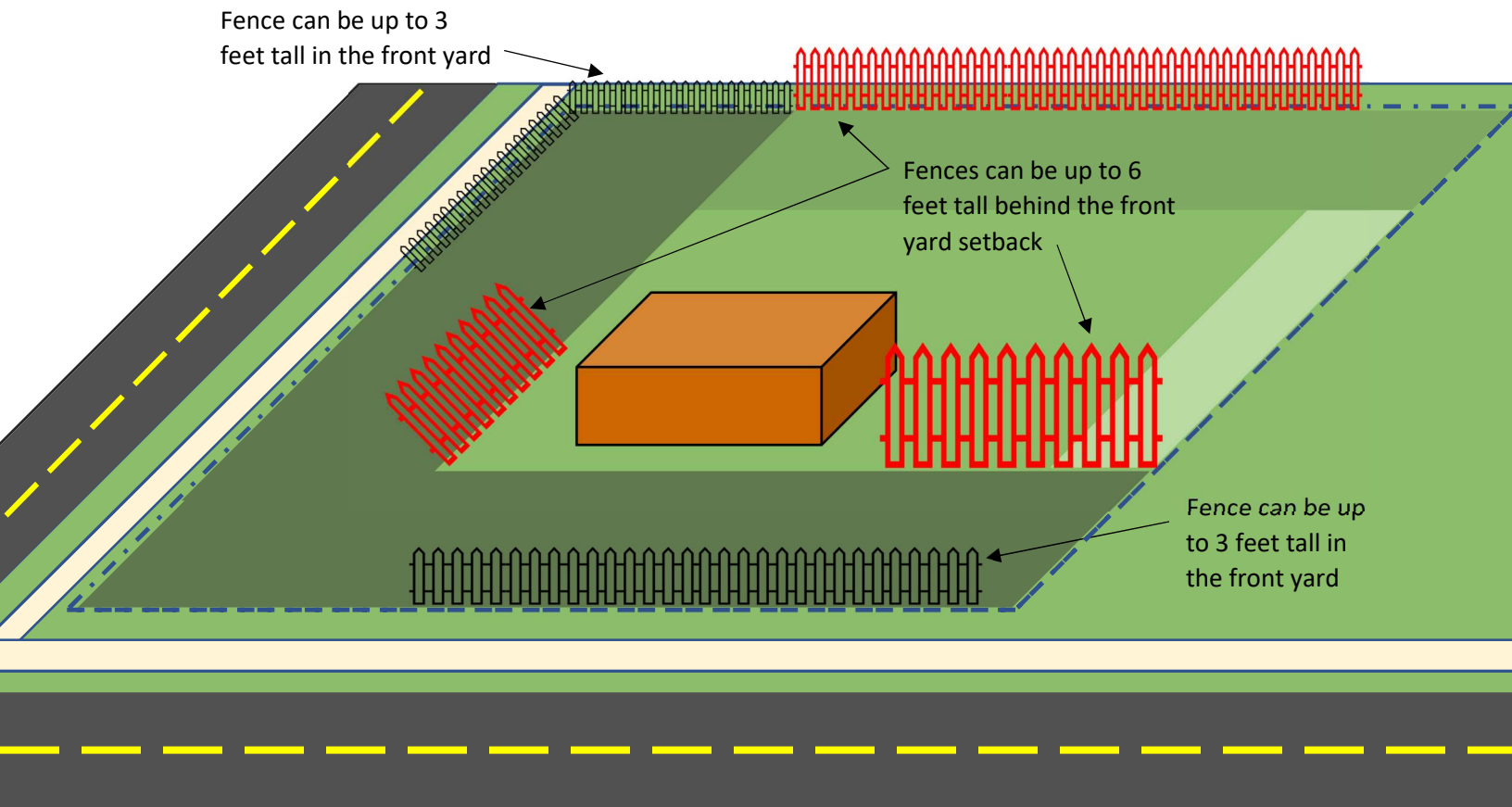
Examples:

- If you wanted to add an attached garage on the side of your house in the R-15 zone, you would need to make sure that it would be located at least:
 - 35 feet from the front property line
 - 10 feet from the closest side property line
 - Also ensure the distance between the new garage and the closest side property line PLUS the distance between the house and the other side property line is over 25 feet
 - 40 feet from the rear property line
- If you wanted to build a detached garage in R-15 that was only 8 feet from the house, it would still follow the setbacks in the attached example above.
- If you wanted to build a detached garage in R-15 that was 20 feet from the house, you would need to make sure it would be located at least:
 - 35 feet from the front property line
 - 5 feet from the closest side property line
 - 5 feet from the rear property line

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Setbacks for Fences

- In general, setbacks do not apply to residential fencing as long as certain height criteria are met:
 - Fences up to 3 feet tall are permitted along all property lines, including the front property line
 - Fences up to 6 feet tall are permitted along the rear and side property lines, and along the front yard setback line. Residential fences over 6 feet tall are not permitted.
 - You CANNOT have a fence over 3 feet tall within the front yard setback per current zoning regulations. So if you have a corner lot, this means you CANNOT have a fence over 3 feet tall in the setback along each road.
- Note: fencing cannot be built “on” the property line. Typically, residents install fencing 6” away or more from the property lines to account for the thickness of the fence itself.

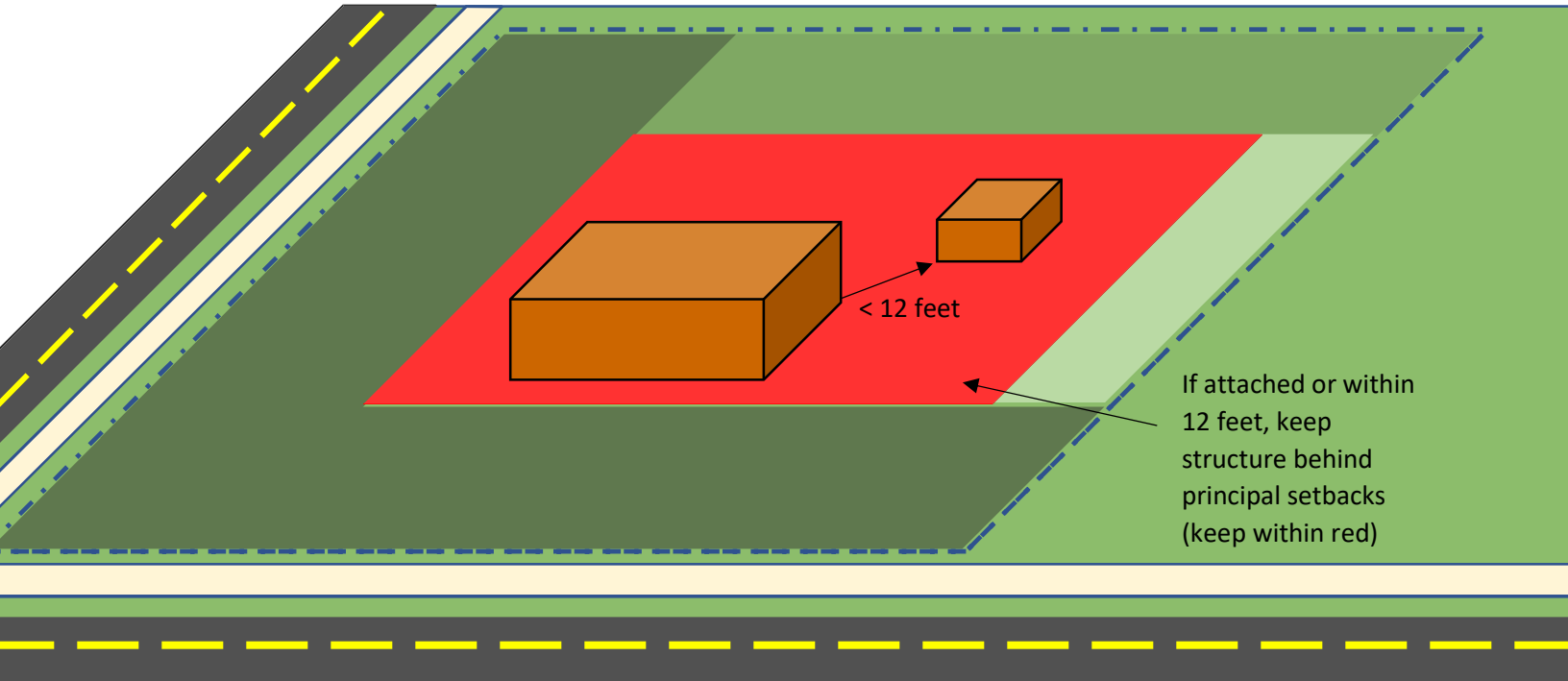


Other information about Fences

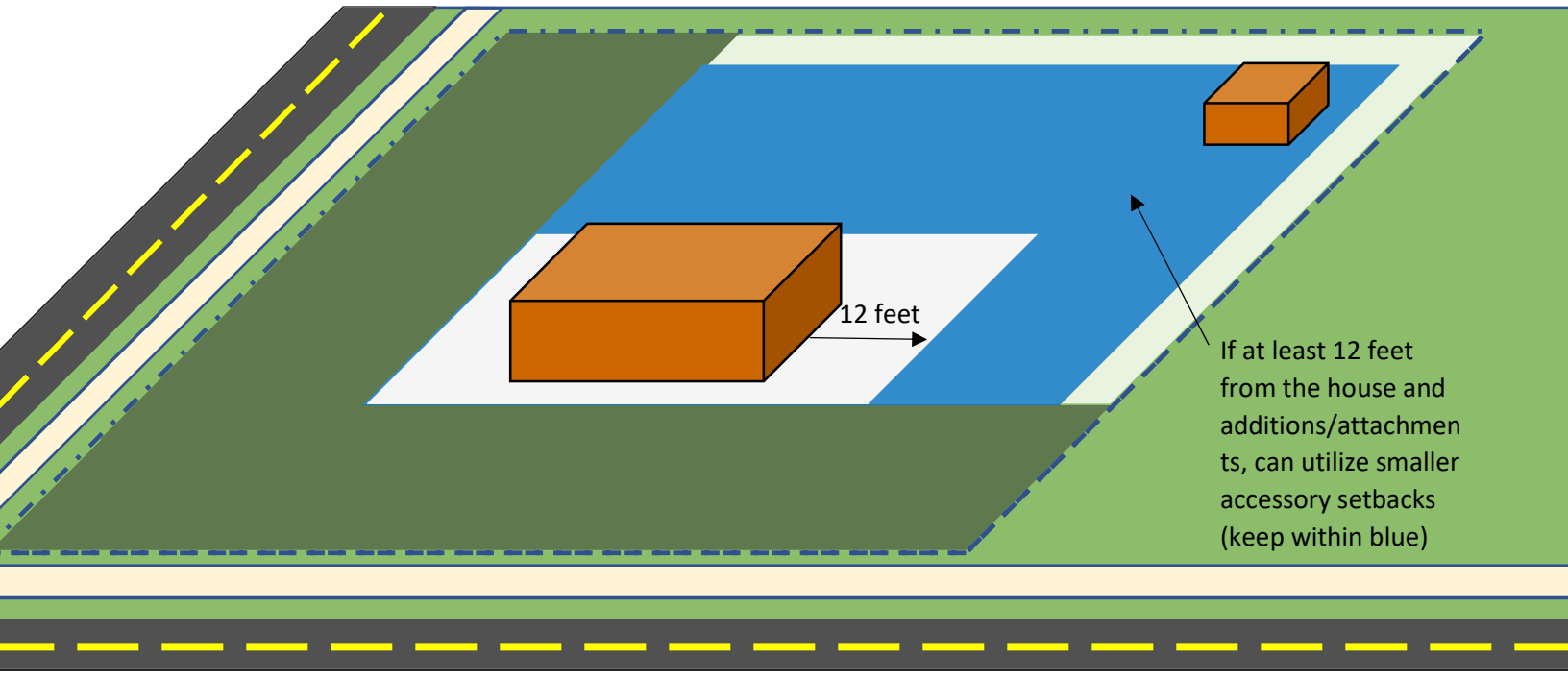
- The nicer looking side of the fence (if there is one) must face outward / towards your neighbors
- The setback/height criteria above do not apply to bushes, trees, and other plantings (e.g., arborvitae)
- **All residential fences:** apply directly to the ZONING department for a Certificate of Zoning Compliance

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Setbacks for Structures – attached or less than 12 feet from the House



Setbacks for Structures – at least 12 feet from the House (and everything attached to the house)



Other information about Accessory Structures

- Maximum height for an accessory structure is 15 feet (ground to the average height of a pitched roof)
- **Sheds 200sf and under:** apply directly to the ZONING department for a Certificate of Zoning Compliance.
- **Sheds over 200sf, Additions, Pools, Garages:** apply to the BUILDING department for a building permit.

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Next Steps for Application

When you apply for approval, you should submit a copy of your survey/plot plan with the fence, shed, or other structure drawn on the plan.

If you do not have a copy of your survey/plot plan, you can contact the Berlin Building Department as they have many surveys on file and may be able to provide a copy to you

On the plot plan, draw the fence/structure you want, plus:

- Include the dimensions of the structure, including the height, length and width.
- For fences, include the lengths of each 'leg' of the fence and the height of the fence

If the building department does not have a copy of your survey/plot plan, you may need to hire a licensed surveyor

- The town does not provide survey services and cannot recommend surveyors
- Online web searches might help locate a surveyor
- We recommend you confirm land surveyor licenses on the State of Connecticut's website:
<https://www.elicense.ct.gov/Lookup/LicenseLookup.aspx>